

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-4, 6 and 19 remain in the application. Claim 1 is independent.

In the prior Office Action dated December 17, 2007, claims 5 and 6 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. In accord with the Examiner's indication, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 5. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested, inasmuch as the amendments to the claims automatically place the application in condition for allowance.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates that claims 5 and 6 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Every effort has been made to adopt the suggestions of the Examiner with a view toward early allowance.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Objections to the Specification

In accord with the instructions from the Examiner, the Abstract of the Disclosure has been amended to address any formalities issues.

Non-elected Inventions

Claims 7-18 and 20 have been canceled, without prejudice, as directed to non-elected subject matter.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the prior Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Suzuki and claims 1, 3, 4 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Asakura. Inasmuch as the allowable subject matter of claim 5 has now been added to independent claim 1, reconsideration and allowance of the present claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been properly traversed and addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Notice of same is earnestly solicited.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Paul T. Sewell, Registration No. 61,784, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: April 10, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Charles Gorenstein

Registration No.: 29,271

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant